

**Developmental Disabilities Services  
Innovation Think Tank**  
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**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

**~ WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW ~**

**Employment Supports** are the different services and supports that help a person to be employed in local jobs and work in the typical workforce.

<b>Employment Supports</b>	
<b>Employment Assessment</b> – Evaluation of the person’s work skills, identification of the person’s preferences and interests and the development of personal work goals	<b>Employer and Job Development</b> – Assist the person to access employment and establish employer development and support, including education, consulting and assisting co-workers and managers
<b>Job training</b> – Assist the person to begin work, learn the job and gain social inclusion at work	<b>Ongoing Support to Maintain Employment</b> – Support activities to sustain paid work by the person. Supports may be on or off site and involve long-term and/or intermittent follow-up

**FY 2017**

<b>Employment Supports</b>	
- People who received supported employment to work	1,256
- Percent of adults employed who get home and community-based services (FY 16)	48%
- Average hourly wage paid	\$10.44
- Average hours worked in a week	8
<b>Youth Transition Programs:</b> Think College, SUCCEED, College Steps, Project SEARCH	
- Students enrolled in Youth Transition Programs	77
- Students who graduated from transition programs	37
- Percent of students employed at graduation	86%

- Supported Employment in Vermont is guided by strong and long-standing values, philosophy, methodology and operating principles.

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

### (What is Happening Now)

- A job can provide a person an income, new skills, a sense of contributing, confidence, independence, social connections and a meaningful career.
- Employers who hire a person benefit from the social inclusion and diversity people bring to the job, along with improved morale, customer loyalty and productivity.
- Employment funding is focused on finding people a specific job that works best for them.
- Group (segregated) employment is not funded.
- People are assisted to find and keep a job. It does not matter about a person's type or level of disability.
- All people who work make Vermont minimum wage or better.
- When requests are made for new Work Supports funding, they cannot be more than a total of 25 hours (including any Community Supports).
- 95% of people interviewed said they "like working [at their job]" (National Core Indicators – NCI)
- 94% of people interviewed said their "co-workers treat them with respect" (NCI)
- 56% of people interviewed said they "work enough hours" (NCI)
- 52% of people interviewed who did not have a job said they "would like to have a job in the community" (NCI)

### ~ WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES ~

- Hard to find good job matches because there are not a lot of jobs available in VT.
- A person with a new need for Work Supports is limited to no more than a total of 25 hours of Work Supports and Community Supports.
- Supported employment has been stable for a long time. The model could benefit from fresh, creative thinking about new ways to do things – and still keep true to the values.
- Because of funding priorities, the first people to get help are people who need more support to find and keep a job. People who would be able to work independently sooner are the least likely to get supports.
- There is not a lot of funding for job development positions at agencies.

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

### ~ *WHAT CAN WORK WELL* ~

- Long-time partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Partnering with businesses that could offer technical training so people can gain skills to work in that industry.
- Posting instruction videos on You Tube to provide training to staff on the best ways to support people to work.
- Providing support to young adults graduating high school to attend college. Use college-age peers to mentor people in classes and socially.
- Project SEARCH matches high school seniors with internships at businesses where they learn work and interpersonal skills. This leads to employment at graduation.
- Working with high school staff to help find jobs for students before they graduate. Teams that include schools, Vocational Rehabilitation, providers and employers can help students become employed before graduating high school.
- Trying short-term jobs to identify a person's interests in different jobs and careers.
- Increasing the number of hours a person works and the amount they earn by shifting the person's Medicaid benefits category to one that allows greater earnings.
- Giving formal recognition to supported employment staff for their work.
- Paying employers to have co-workers provide limited on-the-job training to people.
- Supporting businesses who have employed a number of people with disabilities with integrated, inclusive and individualized employment supports.

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

### ~ *DISCUSSION QUESTIONS* ~

It might be helpful to get your ideas ready ahead of time. These are questions we will be talking about:

1. In your experience, what types of job supports have you found to work the best?
2. What type of job supports have you noticed were not helpful? Could have been done differently?
3. What do you think could be done to help a person find a job?
4. Have you heard of good ways to support a person to work that we can try?
5. What creative supports or ways of doing things that you have learned about that are used in other places?